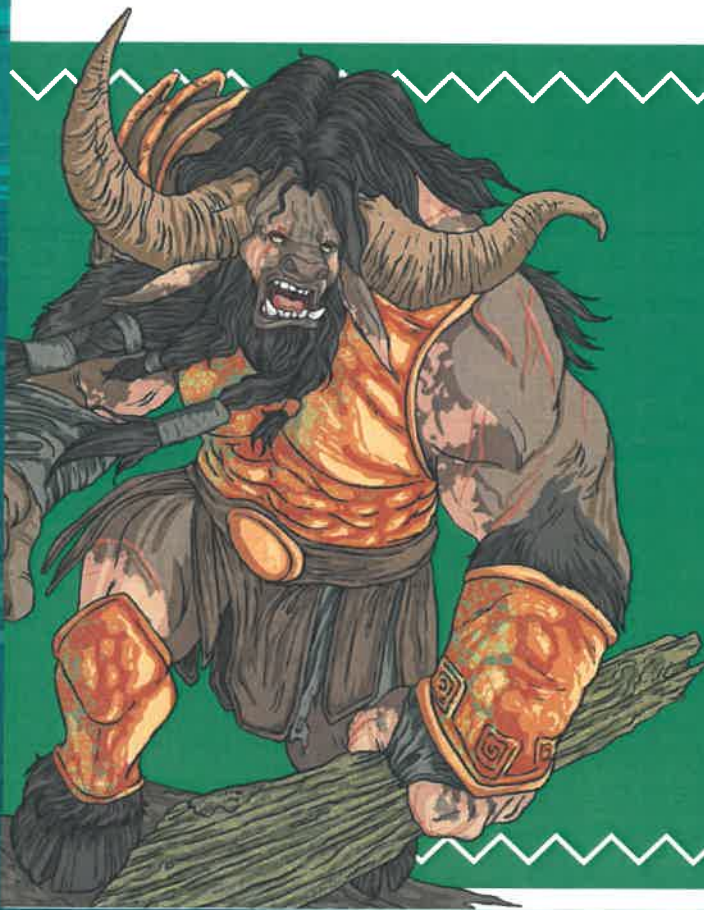


# Theseus and the Minotaur

King Minos was the ill-natured king of Crete. He relished in frequently launching surprise attacks on the grand city of Athens. King Aegeus of Athens wanted to stop the attacks so he struck a terrible bargain with Minos. In exchange for peace, Aegeus would annually send over seven girls and seven boys to be sacrificed to King Minos's Minotaur: a half-man, half-bull beast.



After three years, Aegeus's son called Theseus was fed up. Mentally, he went over his plan as he knocked on the door of his father's study. Before Aegeus could even stand up to meet his son, Theseus had started talking, "This deal with Minos needs to stop. Families are terrified that their children will be picked next. We should be protecting our people – not feeding them to the Minotaur! Tomorrow, I am going to take the place of one of the boys on the ship. Then, I will vanquish the Minotaur and end this horrible agreement."



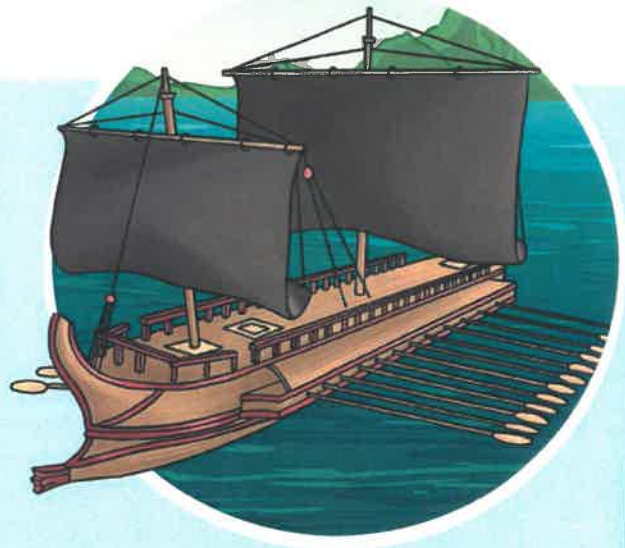
Aegeus was shocked. He knew that his son was strong and brave but the Minotaur was so huge and fierce. To keep it under control, it had to be locked inside a complex maze called a labyrinth. Aegeus begged Theseus to change his mind but eventually, he agreed, "I will not be happy until I know that you are safe. The moment you set sail for home, change your black sails to white ones so that I can see from our cliffs that you are alive and well." Theseus nodded and promised to change his sails.

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The next day, Theseus climbed into the ship alongside 13 shivering, terrified children. When the boat docked, they were met by King Minos and his beautiful daughter, Ariadne. As Minos led the children away, Ariadne pulled Theseus to one side and told him that she recognised him as the prince. She explained that she wanted to escape from her father and offered to help Theseus if he promised to take her away from Crete.

Theseus agreed and the two met outside the labyrinth's entrance that night. In the dark, Ariadne gave Theseus a ball of string, "This labyrinth has been designed to be so complicated that no one can ever escape it. However, if you unravel this string behind you, you will be able to use it to find the entrance again. Good luck!"

With that, the doors to the labyrinth closed and Theseus set off to find the Minotaur. Trailing the string behind him, he searched through the narrow passages until he was face to face with the beast at last. The Minotaur was stronger but Theseus was agile and clever. After a long battle, Theseus emerged victorious. The Minotaur had been defeated.



Theseus immediately made his way to the ship with Ariadne. He had done it! No more children would ever have to meet the Minotaur. Feeling tired but happy, Theseus hoisted the black sails of his ship and headed for home. He'd forgotten all about the promise that he had made to his father.

# Questions

1. What colour was Theseus supposed to change his sails to? Tick one.

- red
- white
- black
- blue

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- Theseus searches for the Minotaur.
- Theseus escapes with Ariadne to his ship.
- Theseus fights and defeats the Minotaur.
- Ariadne gives Theseus a ball of string.

3. What did the Minotaur look like?

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4. Look at the last paragraph. Find and copy one word that means the same as 'lifted up'.

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5. Fill in the missing words.

He \_\_\_\_\_ in frequently launching \_\_\_\_\_ attacks on the grand city of Athens.

6. If you were from Athens, how do you think you would feel about King Aegeus and his deal with Minos?

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7. What do you think is going to happen to Aegeus when he sees Theseus's ship? Explain your answer.

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## Theseus and the Minotaur

8. Do you think Ariadne agreed with her father's deal with Aegeus? Explain your answer.

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